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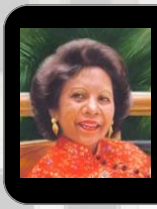

NHS honours Trinidad and Tobago national

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High Commissioner's New Year Message

As we transition from one year to another, I am sure that we are all mindful of the fact that the year 2009 will be a defining year for governments, economies, businesses and individuals all across the globe. Many predict that the current economic downturn will be longer and deeper than past occurrences and economists have failed to forecast exactly when a recovery could materialize.

While the finger pointing and recriminations resound across borders and regulatory bodies and while world leaders wrestle with this issue, life continues for you: our valued nationals of Trinidad and Tobago, friends of the Diaspora, contributors, and subscribers. The way forward for this year and beyond will undoubtedly be cautiously weighted against the backdrop of the rapidly changing imperatives that we face, but move forward we must.

There is no short answer to the question, "Where do we go from here?" Many people today face the ominous possibility of losing their jobs, homes, savings and investments. One of the keys for successfully negotiating the new landscape that we face, however, is to wisely adapt, adopt and adhere to prudential strategies and guidelines. Whether you are an individual or a business entity, this can be viewed as a time to trim the excess, re-focus and re-prioritise. This also presents itself as an opportunity to discover new fulcrums for growth and cost efficiency and to rethink strategies, which will not only allow for short-term survival but also lay the groundwork for growth in the upturn. This can thus be a time peppered with possibilities.

While nature has been generous to our country of Trinidad and Tobago endowing it with a diverse and spectacular beauty, plant and animal life and mineral resources that have prospered our economy for decades, none of these attributes has benefited our country more than our most resilient and enduring resource: our people. To the amazement of the world population, we are known to be a people of enterprise, passion, ingenuity, aspirations and achievements. I am of the firm view that these are the unique qualities, which we need to draw from in order to stay afloat as we ride out the current storms.

In fact, it has been these attributes from our nationals in the United Kingdom and neighbouring European states that have redounded to the success of the events undertaken by the Mission in the past. Be it in the field of sport, business, trade, culture, or community involvement, Trinidad and Tobago nationals continued to demonstrate their worth as standard bearers in their respective fields and as nation-builders wherever they choose to reside.

These gilt-edged inputs are not restricted to the goal-scoring feats of Kenwyne Jones and Jason Scotland or the Savile Row tailoring skills of Andrew Ramroop - which has attracted the attention of Buckingham Palace. I speak on behalf of a grateful nation when I commend the tens of thousands of nationals who quietly and diligently represent Trinidad and Tobago well by excelling in their various spheres throughout Europe.

On a sad note, we are left to mourn the recent passing of a community stalwart, the late Lawrence "Stretch" Noel whose contribution to Carnival Arts in the UK has been immeasurable. Our condolences go out to his family and friends at this time. We hope that in honour of his memory and in advancement of his dreams, many more will take up his mantle and continue from where he has left us.

In support of your initiatives, you have my assurance that the Trinidad and Tobago High Commission in London will continue to function at the highest possible level during these times which have been ushered in. Whilst we accept that some structural adjustments may be made, the trade and cultural agenda of the Mission will continue to be as robust as years past. Nationals will also be kept abreast of important economic updates and their implications via our newsletters, website and National's Meetings.

On behalf of the Trinidad and Tobago High Commission, I wish to convey my sincere best wishes to you and your households for the New Year. I also wish to thank all those who have supported our ventures in the past and those who continue to support initiatives where we focus on the boundless triumphs of our collective heritage.

John Jeremie S.C.

From the Office of the Prime Minister

Left: The Honourable Patrick Manning
Prime Minister
Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Statement by the Honourable Patrick Manning, Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, to the House of Representatives on January 23, 2009, on the Hosting of the Fifth Summit of the Americas and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Port of Spain in 2009.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to address this Honourable House and the national community on the two important international conferences that Trinidad and Tobago will host this year – the Fifth Summit of the Americas and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting.

Almost one year ago, I announced to the country that Trinidad and Tobago will have the honour and privilege of hosting these two Conferences. Today, I want to state quite unequivocally that the Government remains fully committed to the successful hosting of these two Conferences and to meeting all of our obligations to our guests from across the Western Hemisphere and the Commonwealth.

From April 17-19, 2009, the Fifth Summit of the Americas will take place here in Port of Spain and will be followed by the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting from November 27-29. We expect to have more than 70 world leaders here in Port of Spain to discuss issues and develop collective responses that are pertinent to the lives of some 2.8 billion people living in the Americas and the Commonwealth.

I should also add that in the week leading up to the official programme of activities for each Conference, a number of meetings will be convened to engage civil society, private sector leaders and youth representatives in ongoing dialogue on developmental issues and to facilitate their contributions to the respective multilateral processes.

Mr. Speaker, there are misguided notions in some quarters as to why this Government has undertaken these international commitments. Let me assure the national community that when we took the decision to host these events, it was in the context of the very progressive vision we have for this country, and after very, very, careful consideration of the benefits that can accrue to our people, and the wider CARICOM Region from leading multilateral Initiatives of such importance and magnitude. We saw the opportunity to move Trinidad and Tobago to the centre stage of hemispheric and global multilateralism that could also lead to a strategic advantage for our own development and progress.

Mr. Speaker, in this increasingly inter-connected world where many uncertainties abound and change is constant, pursuing development cannot be an insular exercise. May I add, Mr. Speaker, that as one of the more successful economies in this Hemisphere, we also have a lot to offer in terms of good practices that other countries are quite keen for us to share with them.

The point I want to emphasise here is that we must engage in higher levels of bilateral and multilateral cooperation. We must pursue greater integration across this Hemisphere and with major emerging economies; and we must advance the interests, and promote the well-being of our citizens. This strategy is essential for small developing nations like ours. In specific terms, for example, through bi-lateral and multi-lateral agreements, already signed and in the pipe line, we can further the diversification of our economy through encouraging foreign direct investment in the non-energy sector of Trinidad and Tobago. This will promote the sustainability of economic and social development in this country.

It is in this context that we must see the benefits of leading these multilateral initiatives, which are an integral part of our foreign policy, and which consolidate and extend the high and very positive profile that our country now enjoys in international affairs. Our growth and development as a country are very much tied to how we project ourselves in, and engage with, our CARICOM neighbors, our Hemisphere and the wider world. Many of the challenges we face are transnational in nature and therefore, to a significant degree, require transnational solutions. This

Prime Minister's statement (continued)

renewed engagement with the Americas and the Commonwealth of Nations is being complemented by initiatives with West, Central, East and Southern African as well as China and India, two of the most dynamic economies in the world.

There is much to gain from this intense involvement in global affairs. The benefits span the political, economic, social and cultural spheres.

The obvious gain is of a political nature as a relatively small country such as Trinidad and Tobago has a strategic opportunity to host the Presidents and Prime Ministers of this hemisphere and the Commonwealth to discuss pressing priorities against the backdrop of current international developments. As the issues on the global economic and political arena evolve, the Summits create a forum for these leaders to discuss the modalities for collective action in addressing such issues.

The Government also understands the importance of these events for CARICOM Member Countries. We have promoted the Fifth Summit as a CARICOM effort, and will use the opportunity to bring to the forefront of the inter-american and commonwealth agendas, development issues that are relevant to the realities of our small states.

Furthermore, by presiding over this process, Trinidad and Tobago is in a position to give priority to the challenges facing our sub-region; and to propose mechanisms to ensure that the outcome impacts positively on the wellbeing of the people in our own country. I am heartened to know that the other countries are appreciative of the approach adopted by this country to producing tangible results that affect citizens everywhere.

The theme of the Summit of the Americas, is 'Securing our Citizens' Future by Promoting Human Prosperity, Energy Security and Environmental Sustainability'. For the Commonwealth the theme is equally engaging: 'Partnering for a More Equitable and Sustainable Future. These themes address issues that affect all countries, at a time when dramatic changes are taking place. The global economy is now experiencing a deepening slowdown with major economies already in recession, and there is growing opinion that the situation will get worse before it gets better. No country or region is insulated from the negative effects of this situation. Therefore, it is incumbent upon us to find solutions together. In today's interdependent world, we need strengthened partnerships more than ever. Our country is poised at this crucial time in our development to facilitate the kind of dialogue within two important groupings of countries that will provide expanded opportunities for wealth creation; alliances; business partnerships; poverty reduction; job creation; skills development; border security and crime prevention.

Barack Obama
President of the
United States of America

On Tuesday, Mr. Barack Obama was inaugurated the 44th President of the United States. This new leader in the White House has enunciated the need for the kind of diplomacy which brings people together. The Summit of the Americas comes some two months after his inauguration and it will be the first multilateral forum in our Hemisphere at which he will have the opportunity to interact with his counterparts on issues affecting us all. The prospects for a new engagement with Latin America and the Caribbean must not be down-played. We are, therefore, extremely honoured that he will grace our shores to share, for the first time, his vision and hope for the future of our Hemisphere. The US, like the rest of the world, recognises that partnerships are vital to dealing with economic, security, energy and environmental challenges. And, Mr. Speaker, Trinidad and Tobago will provide the platform for the holding of these discussions.

In 1994, when the leaders of the Hemisphere first met in Miami on the initiative of President Clinton, it was against the background of sharing accumulated experiences; programming collective, multilateral and national actions; and developing solutions to the problems that affect the people of the Americas.

I was pleased at that time to represent Trinidad and Tobago. That mandate has not changed. Indeed, Trinidad and Tobago is seeking to make the Declaration of Commitment of Port of Spain different from the preceding Summit documents. We are seeking to focus on strategies for implementation and functional cooperation.

Continues on next page.

Prime Minister's statement (continued)

In fact Mr. Speaker, the conferences in Port-of Spain will set the agenda for the next three years in both the hemisphere and at the level of the Commonwealth. The areas under focus are all extremely pertinent to the further growth and development of all nations, including Trinidad and Tobago. These include:

- The global economic situation;
- Managing the Environment and mitigating the effects of climate change;
- Ensuring reliable and affordable supplies of clean energy;
- Promoting conditions conducive to decent work;
- Expanding economic opportunities for the Youth;
- Strengthening social protection and poverty eradication programmes;
- Building human capacity and competencies through the strengthening of the education system at all levels – early childhood, primary, secondary and tertiary;
- Improving access to comprehensive, quality healthcare;
- Strengthening public security systems;
- Care of the elderly, the disabled and other vulnerable groups;
- Increasing competitiveness, fostering innovation and entrepreneurship; and
- Improving the effectiveness of our implementation mechanisms.

Above: *The head of states during the Fourth Summit of the Americas 2005 in Mar del Plata, Argentina.*

Mr. Speaker, these Conferences give leaders the opportunity to talk to one another, to build partnerships and alliances and to understand the peculiar circumstances facing each country. The goal is to find pragmatic, implementable responses that bring economic and social benefits to all countries, and for the requisite resources to be provided through existing hemispheric institutions and cooperation commitments to finance all the areas I have just outlined.

By broadening our collaborative base, we can ensure the viability of our economy and the sustainability of our society. New opportunities will arise for shaping and strengthening new and existing forms of North-South and South-South cooperation, including increased flow of resources for technical cooperation.

Furthermore, these events are integral events of the strategy of positioning Trinidad and Tobago as a financial and conference centre which will, in turn, spawn economic opportunities for the provision of a wide range of goods and services. This activity will not be confined to the April Summit but will continue through to the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting and other conferences which Trinidad and Tobago has already successfully lobbied to host. This is expected to be a sustainable venture as this country is being increasingly favoured by international organizations to be the venue for their respective fora. This interest acknowledges that Trinidad and Tobago possesses the relevant infrastructure and capacity, of world class standards, to undertake such ventures.

I want to emphasise, Mr. Speaker, that all leaders of the thirty-four countries in this hemisphere are expected to attend the fifth Summit of the Americas. The international media will be here in full force; and during that period the focus of the world will be on Trinidad and Tobago. It is an unprecedented opportunity for our country to be showcased internationally, with the obvious concomitants redounding inevitably to the people of our country.

Following the high-level Summits, it is anticipated that more requests to use our facilities will be forthcoming and that there will be an increase of business tourists on a continuous basis. The opportunities for hotels, taxi drivers, artisans, caterers, interpreters, room attendants, tour operators, business equipment and other suppliers are therefore many. This is an important component of the

Prime Minister's statement (continued)

return on the investment in the waterfront development project.

One must not underestimate the value from the experience of servicing a Summit and the consequent creation of employment, and building of human and institutional capacity including upgrading of skills and infrastructure.

May I remind the national community that the Hyatt Hotel and the other buildings on the Waterfront are all owned by the people of Trinidad and Tobago. Private sector leaders will be meeting almost in parallel with the Heads of State and Government to discuss, in the case of the Fifth Summit, a new agenda for sustaining competitiveness. They will seek to define parameters for working closely with governments to restore stability and confidence in the global trade and economic system and facilitate business growth and human prosperity.

Thus far, the private sector has been enthused by the forthcoming fora and has identified many issues which it would like to see placed on the agenda. They are keen on the linkages to be made with the various regional and international businesses that have shown a keen interest in attending the meetings.

Mr. Speaker, it is a known fact that every host country of these international conferences has reported increased Foreign Direct Investment in the aftermath of the meetings. We have an extraordinary chance to open doors further to trade and industry.

As you can see Mr. Speaker, in one fell swoop, so many national objectives can be achieved with these two conferences. I must however caution those who expect instantaneous results, that the benefits of hosting these events will materialize post 2009, as we begin to implement the commitments agreed on April 19 and November 29, 2009.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of logistics, over the past several months, we have been coordinating our preparations to host the Conferences through a joint public-private sector initiative that has many of our citizens from the business community and civil society working alongside public officers and the National Summit Secretariat. The Secretariat has also been coordinating its efforts with the Organisation of American States in Washington DC and with the Commonwealth Secretariat in London.

In the area of security, many of the regional and international mechanisms for assistance used for Cricket World Cup will be reactivated.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank all our citizens who have participated in the preparation thus far. I also thank those countries that have graciously offered their support to us in preparing for these multilateral initiatives.

Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the national community that we will be ready with all the preparations. In the planning process, logistics and security coordinators have been working quite diligently to minimize the disruptions to our citizens and our business community. However, I urge all our citizens to understand the critical responsibility we have of ensuring the safety and comfort of our visitors.

Some disruptions are inevitable. Beginning next week, the National Summit Secretariat will begin a series of public communications initiatives to keep the national community abreast of the arrangements that are being developed.

Mr. Speaker, we are less than three months away from the Fifth Summit of the Americas. Let us not underestimate the importance of our role as host and the benefits it can bring to the development of our country and our sub-region. Together, the Fifth summit of the Americas and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting will be the most significant international undertakings on which we have embarked in the history of our country. As a nation, and as a people, we must seize the opportunity to take our rightful place in global affairs, and to chart our own destiny. We must work in concert to welcome our friends from across the Americas and the Commonwealth and to showcase our talents, our skills and our warmth and energy. Lets us be proud of the respect our country has in the global community and let us show the world what a great people we are.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Government and Central Bank Bailout CIB/CLICO

Remarks on CIB/CLICO issue by Ewart S. Williams (pictured), Governor, Central Bank of Trinidad & Tobago at a press conference on January 30 2009.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Some of you may know that CIB has been facing liquidity challenges over the past few weeks. These challenges came to a head in the last few days when the bank began to face an unusually high level of withdrawal requests which put a strain on their available liquid resources.

Clico has also been facing liquidity problems, though nowhere near the levels of CIB. Of course, given the close integration of these two financial institutions within the CL Financial Group, it is just a matter of time before Clico also begin to come under severe liquidity pressures.

The Inspector of Financial Institutions and the Governor of the Central Bank met with the Chairman and Chief Financial Officer of CL Financial on January 7 2009. In a second meeting on January 13 2009, Clico's Chairman formally raised the issue of possible financial assistance from the Central Bank.

There is no doubt that the increase in CIB withdrawals and the nervousness seen at Clico have something to do with the depositors' concerns about the impact of the sharp decline in methanol and real estate prices on CL Financial's overall financial situation.

In the Bank's view however, the current financial difficulties being faced by CIB and Clico have more to do with three things:

- excessive related-party transactions which carry significant contagion risks. I should note that the high level of concentration is not specifically prohibited by the present legislation.
- An aggressive high interest rate resource mobilization strategy to finance equally high risk investments, much of which are in illiquid assets (including real estate both in Trinidad and Tobago and abroad).
- A very high leveraging of the Group's assets, which constrains the potential amount of cash that could be raised from asset sales.

In our regular monitoring of CIB, and of Clico since 2004 (when insurance supervision was transferred from the Ministry of Finance), the Central Bank has consistently focused on these deficiencies but have been stymied by the inevitable challenge of change and by inadequacies in the legislative framework which do not give the Bank the authority to demand these changes.

The Central Bank is very conscious of the contagion risks that financial difficulties in an institution as vast as the CL Financial Group could have on the entire financial system of Trinidad and Tobago and indeed in the entire Caribbean region.

For the record, ladies and gentlemen, the CL Financial Group has an imposing presence with potentially systemic consequences for the financial sector and the economy of Trinidad and Tobago and the entire region.
For example:

1. the Group controls over ($100) billion of assets in at least 28 companies located throughout the Region and the world.
2. The Group's financial interests cover several industry sectors including banking and financial services, energy, real estate and manufacturing and distribution. The four largest financial institutions in the Group manage assets of over $38 billion, over 25 per cent of the country's GDP.
3. In addition to Clico, among the Group's holdings is the British American Insurance Company Limited, which is one of the main insurance companies in the Eastern Caribbean.

After intense discussions over the past week the Central Bank, the Ministry of Finance and representatives of the CL Financial Group have reached agreement on a strategy to deal with the liquidity challenges of CIB and Clico and to address the underlying problems that have given rise to the current financial stress.

The principal objectives of the strategy are to ensure that resources are available to meet withdrawals of third-party CIB depositors and Clico policy holders; to protect the funds of the depositors and policy holders and in so doing maintain confidence in Clico and reinforce confidence in

Remarks by Governor Williams (continued)

the financial sector as a whole.

The main elements of the strategy are as follows:

- The Central Bank will take control of CIB under section 44D of the Central Bank Act.
- Early next week all the third-party assets and liabilities on the books of CIB and CMMB will be transferred to First Citizens Bank. These liabilities will be matched by resources from the sale of CIB's holdings of certain high quality assets. The Central Bank will provide short term liquidity as needed to ensure that these liabilities are serviced.
- Following the execution of these transactions, CIB's banking license will be revoked.
- Clico has a sizeable Statutory Fund deficit. CL Financial has agreed to divest additional assets to help fund this deficit. The Government has committed to provide any additional funding that is needed by Clico.
- Government funding will be provided in exchange for collateral and an equity interest in Clico. It will also act as a catalyst for implementing a change in the current business model and corporate governance structure of Clico.

The intention will be to return Clico to its original moorings.

I would like to emphasize that these considerable steps being taken – by the CL Financial Group, the Government and the Central Bank are specifically designed to tell CIB's depositors that your funds are safe and to maintain confidence in Clico which for decades has been the strength of the insurance sector in Trinidad and Tobago and in the region. Clico's policy holders can also be assured that the long term future of Clico will be guaranteed by the adoption of a more robust and less risky model.

Because any stress in one corner of the financial system tends to raise concerns throughout the sector, I would also take the opportunity to remind the national community of the tremendous strength of our financial system, which indeed is the envy of the region. Excluding CIB, the banking system now boast of an average capital adequacy level of 18 per cent, compared with a recommended minimum of 8 per cent; in contrast to the illiquidity of CIB, the rest of the banking system is plagued by excess liquidity; the overall level of non-performing loans is an impressively low 2 per cent and the banks have more than adequate level of provisions against bad loans.

Let me support the point raised by Minister Tesheira on the need to accelerate some aspects of the new Insurance Act on which we have been working for some time in collaboration with industry stakeholders. We absolutely need updated insurance legislation to regulate the insurance industry in normal times as well as in times of financial stress.

The "fast track" amendments to the 1980 Insurance Act that are being proposed will provide us with the authority to conduct on-site supervision; will give us the legal basis to share information with other regulators (I should note that CLICO and its affiliate British American have vast regional operations) and will allow the Central Bank to take prompt corrective action to protect depositors, if and when necessary.

Before ending I would like to acknowledge the high level of cooperation that we have received from Mr. Duprey in our efforts to address what must be a very difficult period for the CL Financial Group.

I should also recognize the role of First Citizens Bank in doing its part to help stabilize the banking system. Resolving the problems of Clico will call for continued collaboration between CL Financial, Government and the Central Bank, but moreso on the collaboration of the entire financial community led by ATTIC and BATT. While it is currently a CL Financial problem, only the concerted and vigorous action of the entire financial sector would stave off financial contagion. This is not the time for companies to take advantage of CIB/Clico's problems to expand their balance sheet: this is the time to let competition take a back seat and to support the Government and the Central Bank to keep Clico as a functioning entity and to ensure the continued stability of our financial system.

The actions that we will be taking over the next several weeks and months will only work if they have the support of the community of depositors and policyholders as well as the entire financial sector.

We are confident that the proposed strategy will lead to a financial sector that is more resilient to deal with the adverse currents now buffeting the global economy.

Prime Minister Manning undergoes successful surgery in Cuba

The Honourable Patrick Manning
Prime Minister
Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

In December 2008, the Honourable Patrick Manning, Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, underwent surgery in Havana, Cuba, to remove a tumour from his left kidney.

The illness and requisite surgery meant that the Prime Minister was away from Office for a period of four weeks.

During his absence, Senator the Hon. Dr. Lenny Saith carried out the duties of Prime Minister.

The High Commission is pleased to report that the surgery was a success and after returning to Trinidad and Tobago at the end of the month, Prime Minister Manning resumed duties on January 5, 2009.

Trinidad and Tobago included in new group among gas producing countries

Right: His Excellency John Jeremie S.C. (fourth from right) with Russia's Prime Minister, Vladimir Putin (centre) and other representatives at the Gas Exporting Countries Forum, Moscow, December 2008.

His Excellency John Jeremie S.C. represented Trinidad and Tobago at a meeting of the Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF) in Moscow on December 22nd and 23rd 2008.

The countries represented at the meeting were Algeria, Bolivia, Brunei, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Libya, Malaysia, Nigeria, Qatar, Russia, the United Arab Emirates, Venezuela and Trinidad and Tobago. Equatorial Guinea and Norway attended the meeting as observers.

Russia's Prime Minister, Vladimir Putin addressed the Forum where he indicated that the increasing cost of production and exploration will eventually lead to higher natural gas prices worldwide.

At the Forum the GECF leaders adopted a charter and agreed to establish a permanent office in Doha, Qatar.

According to the Hon. Conrad Enill, Trinidad and Tobago's Minister of Energy, "Qatar was the logical choice since Qatar and some of the bigger gas producing countries had the resources and size to maintain such an office which Trinidad and Tobago does not have."

Following the discussions at the Forum, some observers suggested that the GECF may develop into an Opec – style producers cartel.

The speculation increased with the news that the charter had been adopted and that the GECF leaders had agreed to establish permanent offices.

President Putin also said that Russia was prepared to set up the headquarters in St Petersburg and would give it full diplomatic status.

British Celebrity Chef Gary Rhodes Films in Trinidad and Tobago

Celebrity chef, writer and restaurateur Gary Rhodes (pictured above) recently spent time in Trinidad and Tobago filming segments for a Caribbean cuisine programme.

The series will feature cooking and recipes from ten Caribbean countries including Jamaica, Grenada, Trinidad and Tobago, St Lucia and Barbados and will be broadcast on UKTV. Filming on location at Crews Inn, Chaguaramas, with the marina as his backdrop, the Trinidad and Tobago segment promises to be a wonderful reflection of the beauty of the twin-island republic.

Working in conjunction with the Trinidad and Tobago Tourism Development Company (TDC) and the Trinidad and Tobago Film Company (TTFC), shooting segments for the show were facilitated in both Trinidad and Tobago.

Hosted by a representative of the TDC, Mr. Rhodes' crew explored some of the culinary and cultural highlights that Trinidad and Tobago had to offer. This included a river lime in Lopinot, a trip to Maracas Bay and a tour of the Chaguanas market, with top local chef Khalid Mohammed as their guide.

Rhodes selected saheena with tamarind chutney, pelau, curry shrimp and paratha as the recipes he would feature for the Trinidad segment of the show.

An exciting feature of his show is the opportunity it affords international chefs who apply and qualify (based on their culinary expertise and experience) to work with Gary on the set. For the segment at Crews Inn a local chef/caterer and a Jamaican restaurateur were the qualifying chefs.

"I am enjoying Trinidad and Tobago tremendously. The food I have tasted has been sensational! This is posing a headache for me because the final show is supposed to feature just one dish from each country and I know that I will be hard pressed to decide which to choose from Trinidad and Tobago, because they have all been so good."

Above: *Chef Gary Rhodes at Poolside Crews Inn, Chaguaramas, Trinidad and Tobago.*

The crew went on to film for three days in Tobago on location at the Stone Haven Inn and in Arnos Vale, where Rhodes worked alongside Trinidad and Tobago's top female chef, Deborah Sardinha- Metiver.

Article and pictures provided by the Trinidad and Tobago Film company www.trinidadandtobagofilm.com

Above: *Crews Inn Chef Fazil Bacchus with Gary Rhodes.*

Attention Nationals

This is the first in a series the Government of Trinidad and Tobago and the Central Bank have organized to provide you with ongoing information.

ANSWERS TO SOME OF YOUR QUESTIONS ON THE GOVERNMENT'S RESCUE OF CL FINANCIAL

Additionally, we have established a hotline (623-0241) from 9:00am to 4:00pm (Monday - Friday) which you are invited to call for information. You can also email your queries to us at: info@central-bank.org.tt. You can expect a response within 12 hours.

Q. What is the status of Clico Investment Bank's (CIB) employees?

A. *CIB's employees are expected to continue to report to work as usual. As a priority, the Central Bank will conduct an assessment of the human resource requirements during this transition period and will advise employees accordingly.*

Q. I'm a retiree with a deposit at CIB … what happens to my money now?

A. *Your deposit is safe. Under the terms of the agreement between the Government of Trinidad and Tobago and CL Financial, the Central Bank under the Central Bank Act will transfer assets and liabilities that are approved by the Central Bank to First Citizens Bank.*

Q. I'm a proud CLICO policyholder … CLICO insured my parents, now my wife and myself … what happens to my policy now?

A. *CLICO continues to be a company of which we can feel proud – its achievements are many. As the Minister of Finance Karen Nunez Tesheira indicated in her statement:" …substantial steps have been taken to protect the depositors and other liability holders of the group, especially life insurance clients and pension fund beneficiaries…I wish to reiterate this Government's commitment to ensure that depositors' assets will not be at risk."*

Q. What's going to happen to my shares in Republic Bank?

A. *Nothing. You continue to keep your shares. They will continue to hold their value. The shares in Republic Bank held by CL Financial are now under the control of the Central Bank and the Government. Your shares will continue to reflect the superior performance of the Bank and we expect will continue to grow in value.*

Attention Nationals

Q. Is my money safe in Republic now?

A. *Definitely – as safe as it has always been. The issues that have affected CIB, CLICO, CMMB and British American, have had no impact whatsoever on Republic Bank.*

Q. When the first investment bank failed in the US, it was the beginning of the end … can we expect other insurance companies and financial institutions to run into trouble?

A. *Certainly not. The Governor of the Central Bank Ewart Williams stressed the strength of the Trinidad and Tobago financial system. He said that: "the banking system now boasts of an average capital adequacy level of 18 percent, compared with the recommended 8 percent. " He made the point that the banking sector is extremely liquid- with the exception of CIB.*

Q. I bank at First Citizens and I've watched them grow into a profitable bank … will taking over CIB and CMMB affect their profitability?

A. No. The Bank will not be impaired in any way and will not suffer any loss. *FCB's Chief Executive Officer Larry Howai noted at Friday's media conference that the Bank has a strong balance sheet, with management capability and a proven track record in handling transitions such as this.*

Q. When will I be able to access my CIB deposit from First Citizens?

A *First Citizens is working closely with the Central Bank at finalizing the administrative arrangements to ensure that the transition is seamless for you – the CIB depositor.*

Q. We all know of at least one business that has failed … why have the Central Bank and the Government made this extraordinary effort to save the CL Financial Group.

A. *CL Financial is an extraordinary company with financial interests spanning several industries. The wide scope of coverage and the sheer size of the Group means that should one of the financial entities in the Group fail, this event could have implications locally and regionally. By intervening so quickly, the Central Bank and the Government have sought to place depositors' assets out of risk.*

World Expo 2010 Shangai, China

by Dionne Ligoure

In 2010, Trinidad and Tobago is due to participate in the World Expo in Shanghai, China. This Expo will be the largest expo ever held since the start of the World Expo's in Hyde Park, London in 1851.

With a projected minimum of 36,000* business opportunities and 400,000 to 600,000 visitors daily, the Shanghai World Expo 2010 is an excellent platform for Trinidad and Tobago to project a strong national brand while presenting its business, investment tourism and cultural products to the world.

While much of the financial benefits of participation remain undocumented, an independent study undertaken for the Dutch Pavilion at the World Expo 2000 estimated that €350 million in potential revenues were generated.

In the absence of an Embassy in China, the key to Trinidad and Tobago's successful participation is meticulous planning and efficient management of the preparation process. ETeck (Evolving Technologies Limited) is the lead agency dealing with the event.

SHANGHAI WORLD EXPO 2010

For Trinidad and Tobago the 2010 Expo holds great economic and branding potential.
Just as the Beijing Olympic Games was hailed as one of the greatest, so to, the World Expo hosted by Shanghai promises, in scale and ingenuity, to rival anything that came before.

- The site covers 5.28 million square kilometres
- Running from May 1 to October 31, the average visitor volume is expected to peak at 600,000 per day
- 70 million people are expected to visit over the six month duration
- 182 countries and 45 international organisations have confirmed participation
- The Expo's Park will normally open 15 hours a day from 9.00 a.m. to midnight
- Participants sections will open for 13 hours a day from 9.30 a.m. to 10.30 p.m

Call for creativity in Agriculture

Above: The Honourable Peter Taylor, Minister of Legal Affairs, right, examines one of the new citrus varieties, Chinasing Dunks. Looking on are Dr. Rolf Jordan (far left), Vice Secfretary General of the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV), and Dexter Samm, Agriculture Assistant II in the Ministry of Agriculture.

Legal Affairs Minister, the Hon. Peter Taylor, delivered the feature address at a regional seminar on *the Protection of New Plant Varieties* under the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV) convention at the Crowne Plaza, Wrightson Road, Port-of-Spain. In his address, Minister Taylor called on citizens to become more creative and innovative in agricultural production.

The four-day seminar was organised by the Governemnt of Trinidad and Tobago and the Intellectual Property Office of the Ministry of Legal Affairs, in collaboration with UPOV and the US Patent and Trade Mark Office (USPTO). Commenting at the opening, Minister Taylor stated: "With the challenges posed by the rising food prices and the way the price of oil has plummeted, the onus is on us to become innovative and creative. The opportunity is now for us to find new sources of income with our creativity." He added that there were many local products which were not known in the international world.

In addition, he encouraged farmers to use that creativity in agriculture to produce new plant varieties (plant breeding): "This regional seminar would also present a strategy for conservation and protection of the different species of crops not only for your own intrinsic value in the ecosystem but also for sustainablity of the agricultural sector."

According to the honourable Minister, this would provide an opportunity to boost agricultural production in Trinidad and Tobago and generate new income. Minister Taylor, having admitted that many of the nation's virgin forests and vegetation were lost in the quest to make lands available for capital development, said that this was expected of a developing nation. However, he noted that what was required was not necessarily large tracts of arable land, "but essentially human creative qualities which allowed our cocoa and anthurium industries to flourish." He said, "It was important to build on that foundation by making use of the strong plant breeder's rights system available in order for Trinidad and Tobago to make strident efforts to establish itself on the plant-breeding map."

More Information

The ministry of agriculture will launch five new varieties of Cocoa in the near future under the new Plant Varieties Act.

NHS honours Trinidad and Tobago National

Celebrating 40 years of service

Children's Centre Health Visitor Oma Ramroop is celebrating 40 years in the NHS this month.

Mrs.Ramroop is based at Lisson Grove Health Centre where she has helped thousands of families with health related matters, including breastfeeding, since 1998; in fact one of her key successes has been doubling the number of mothers breastfeeding their babies in Westminster.

Oma said: "When I started here, Westminster had one of the lowest breastfeeding rates in the country of 64% at birth, dropping to 36% after ten days. Now with increased support we have improved the rates to 85% to 90% at birth with a continuation rate of 65% rate at six weeks. I am delighted to help families with this as breastfeeding is so important for the health of babies in the short and long term."

Oma is celebrating with her family and her husband Andrew who has recently been named on the Queen's New Years Honours list. He was awarded an OBE for his distinction in bespoke tailoring and training.

She started her career training to be a nurse in Shropshire and then continued her midwifery training at St Mary's in Paddington. After the birth of her two children, she worked as a Health Visitor in Camden. In 1988, Oma began working for the NHS in Westminster. Initially she introduced a Health Information desk to give local people easy access to health advice which proved popular, and gave stop smoking support in the community at Church Street Market.

Oma now helps train a future generation of health visitors at London universities following her completion of Specialist Community Practice Training. She works closely with the Child Health Institute in supporting the training of World Health Organisation International policy students on breastfeeding.

Oma Ramroop

In her career, she has helped thousands of families every year to 'think healthy'. Many who have written to her acknowledging the invaluable service she provides.

Director of Nursing at NHS Westminster, Ann Duncan, said: "Oma has made a terrific contribution improving the health in Westminster through her work in increasing the rate of breastfeeding. We hope her 40th year in the NHS will prove her best yet."

Foreign Exchange Rates as at February 03, 2009.

Currency	Counter: Buying	Selling	Notes: Buying
Pound Sterling	8.7673	9.1469	8.2623
US Dollar	6.1019	6.2544	6.0000

Source: Scotiabank Trinidad & Tobago Limited

WTI Cushing Spot Crude Oil Price on February 03, 2008 $40.08per barrel

'Working Holiday Maker' a thing of the past

by Donald Chambers

Solicitor Jessica Learmond-Criqui makes her presentation at the January nationals meeting at the TTHC.

Young Trinidad and Tobago nationals hoping to come to the United Kingdom to find work and travel on a short term basis may no longer do so under the Working Holiday visa, as the category has been abolished. This was one of the many informed points raised by solicitor Jessica Learmond-Criqui, guest speaker at the January nationals meeting at the Trinidad and Tobago High Commission, London.

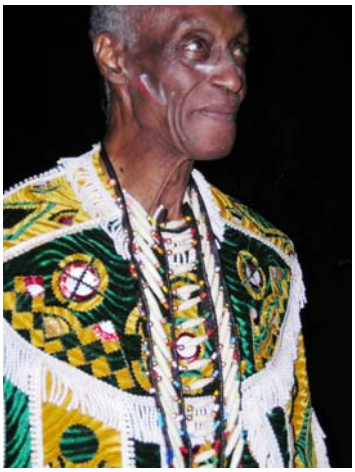
Ms. Learmond-Criqui spoke to nationals on the new United Kingdom immigration rules and their effects on nationals residing in the UK, and those intending to travel or relocate to the United Kingdom. Among the many points raised, she noted that the Working Holiday Maker visa, a popular category with young Trinidad and Tobago nationals, was closed on November 26, 2008. She explained that the nearest category to this under the new immigration rules was the Youth Mobility Scheme, but that to date, Trinidad and Tobago had not signed on as a participating country.

According to Learmond-Criqui, on February 20, 2008, the UK Government published the Green Paper 'The Path to Citizenship: Next Steps in Reforming the Immigration System'. In this document, the British Home Office outlined proposals for changing the ways that someone can become a British citizen or remain in the United Kingdom as a permanent resident. These proposals are collectively called 'Earned Citizenship'. She indicated that whilst some of the schemes under the new bill are already in place, such as the post-study worker category, most of the changes to the immigration rules, if approved by the British Parliament, will not be implemented until late 2009.

Under the new system, migrants with a route to citizenship will need to complete a period of temporary residence before being eligible to progress to 'probationary citizenship'. At this stage, migrants will be tested on their knowledge on life in the UK and will be required to undertake 'a wide variety of civic activities,' that are deemed beneficial to the local community. Only upon satisfying these requirements can a migrant attain British citizenship or permanent residence.

To view the full transcript of Ms. Learmond-Criqui's presentation, highlighting the details of the new Bill and its effects on Trinidad and Tobago nationals, please visit the High Commission's website at www.tthighcommission.co.uk

Editor's Note: A national of Trinidad & Tobago, Jessica Learmond-Criqui qualified first as a barrister in the UK in the 1980s (called to the Bar both in London and in Trinidad & Tobago) and then a solicitor, and has worked in the field of Employment and Business Immigration law for almost twenty years. She has extensive experience dealing with immigration issues including the areas of work permit, residence and settlement applications and obtaining the appropriate visas for foreign nationals who wish to pursue an economic activity in the UK e.g. businessmen, investors, writers, artists, composers and highly skilled migrant workers. Jessica is a graduate of King's College, London University (LLB (Hons), LLM (Hons)), and heads her own practice - Learmond Criqui Sokel LLP - which she established in June 2006. She has been mentioned in 'Legal 500' as one of the UK's top employment lawyers.



Tribute to Lawrence Noel

by Leela Ramdeen, Attorney-at-Law & Education Consultant

Lawrence "Stretch" Noel (pictured), carnival pioneer and band-leader of Trinbago Carnival Club in London, succumbed to lung cancer and passed away in hospital on December 23rd, aged 73. Lawrence was born and grew up in Trinidad. He migrated to the UK in 1959 to pursue an engineering course. The last time I saw Lawrence was at the Gala Dinner and Awards ceremony held in October 2008 at the Imperial Banqueting Suite, London. It was organised by the TT High Commission, in partnership with the TT Professionals Network UK. Lawrence was among those who received an award - for his contribution to Carnival in the UK and Europe.

We were told that someone else would receive the award on his behalf because he was ill. We were pleasantly surprised to see Lawrence walk up to receive his award. There was an air of distinction about him. All eyes were fixed on this tall, imposing figure in his black outfit. He chatted with me during the course of the dinner and I could sense that he was quite ill. Roland, the youngest of his 8 children and a good friend of my family, has provided me with some of the information used in this tribute to his father. It is to Roland that Lawrence passed on the baton to keep up the family tradition of 'mas making'.

Lawrence's involvement in Notting Hill Carnival goes back to the 1960s. In 1973 he brought out the first costumed band at the Carnival. Within a 3 week period he designed and constructed 2 large costumes and 38 others on the theme: Head Hunters. The costumes were made in his house in Leytonstone with the help of his wife, Joan, and some of their friends. Lawrence led the band. Ebony Steelband accompanied Lawrence's Head Hunters costumes on the streets. As the Soca Professor wrote in 2008, "Ebony Steelband was the first racked steelband to come out on the streets of Notting Hill for the Carnival festivities." Until that time, all other bands were pan-around-the-neck steelbands. It was Lawrence who "constructed the first historic pan-rack for Ebony Steelband in 1973". Lawrence introduced carnival costume-making workshops in 1975 to educate/train people in the art of carnival costume design and construction. He ran workshops across Europe – in schools, with youth centres and community groups etc. Lawrence was a highly respected carnival artist.

Lawrence's Trinbago Carnival Club was "the first Carnival band to bring its own mobile soca sound system onto the streets of Notting Hill after they were let down by their regular accompanying steelband." His son, Roland says: "Many have called him a 'creative genius' and a 'legend'. There are no words that can describe his positive energy, welcoming charisma and caring nature. He inspired and supported numerous groups and individuals from around the world with his creativity, love and passion for carnival arts. His works have featured in numerous plays, exhibitions and productions. He has also won many awards, trophies and accolades for his contribution to Carnival in the UK and Europe. His efforts were recognised by HRH Prince Charles in 1979 when he was invited to Buckingham Palace, and received an award from the Prince in appreciation of his artistic and community contributions to British life."

Over the years, Lawrence and his band have created thousands of spectacular costumes. He was a master craftsman. His skills at wire-bending were unsurpassed. His costumes have featured on TV programmes e.g. Top of the Pops. His band also participated in the Lord Mayor's annual parade and in the parade down Pall Mall for the Queen's Golden Jubilee in 2002.

Lawrence was a kind, loving, friendly, generous and humble man. He was one of the truly talented men of our era and represents the finest traditions of our people. He used his God-given talents for the common good. His legacy will endure long after his death. He built a strong family and is survived by his wife of over 46 years, Joan, his 8 children and 18 grandchildren.

Lawrence's funeral took place on Friday 23rd January 2009 at Our Lady of Lourdes RC Church, 51 Cambridge Park, Wanstead, London E11 2PR. He was buried at St Patrick's Cemetery Lodge, Langthorne Road, London.

Lawrence Noel will be greatly missed. May his soul rest in peace.

Mark your calendar

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO HIGH COMMISSION & NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS – SCHEDULE OF EVENTS FEBRUARY - JULY 2009

Wednesday 25th February - National Gathering & Book Launch - Dr. Selwyn Cudjoe

Wednesday 25th March – Nationals meeting

Saturday 4th April – Spiritual Baptist Liberation Service

Wednesday 29th April – Nationals meeting

Monday 4th May—Luton Carnival

May (date to be announced) - Chelsea Flower Show

Wednesday 27th May – Nationals meeting

Saturday 30th May – Indian Arrival Day Celebrations

June (date to be announced) - Hampton Court Flower Show

Wednesday 24th June – Nationals meeting

Wednesday 29th July – Nationals meeting

For more information please contact the Public Affairs Department at 020 7201 9686.

provided by:

Krishna Ragbir
Student Officer

Curried Duck

1 duck 4-5 lb (2kg)
6 cloves of garlic
2-3 chopped spring onions
2 onions
2-3 sprigs thyme
5-6 sprigs coriander or Chaden Ben (cilantro)
2 tbs. Green geera (cumin)
1 tsp. multi Fennyrak Methi
salt & pepper to taste
dash of Angostura bitters
1 tsp. Lea & Perrin
6 tbs. Curry powder
4 tsp. Vegetable oil
2 cups Hot water
1 hot pepper or 4 green chillies (optional)
2 tbs. All purpose seasoning.

Method

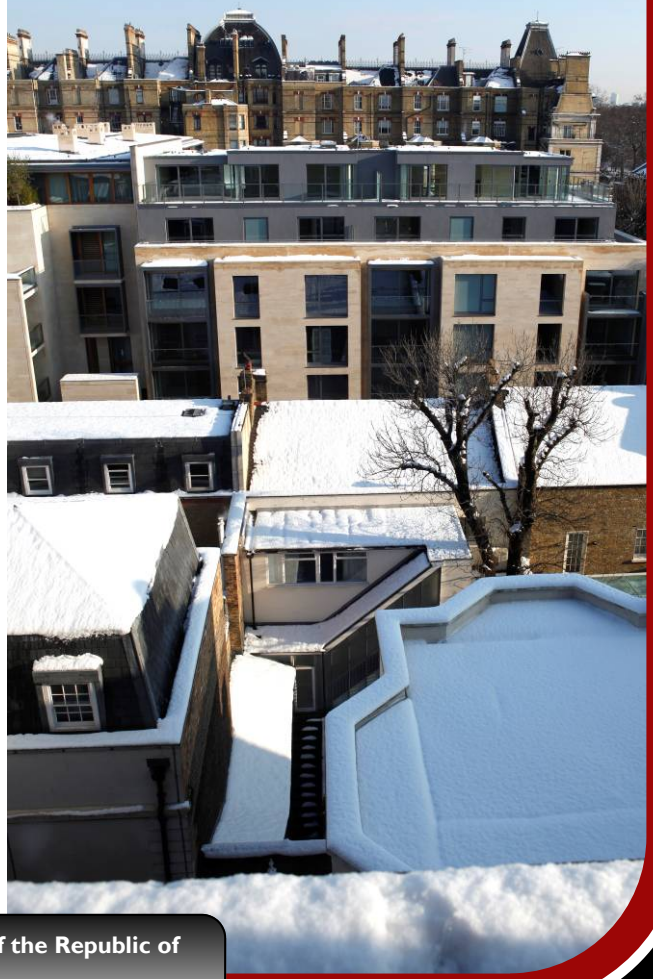
- Heat oil in a heavy pot adding the methi, and the chopped onion, garlic and hot pepper.
- Allow to sauté
- Add curry powder with a small amount of water to the mixture and allow to fry for a few minutes
- Add duck meat, spring onion, thyme, salt , black pepper, Lea & Perrin and all purpose seasoning
- Turn after 3-4 minutes
- Cover and leave to cook on gas mark 4 for about 20 minutes.

Focus on the Mission

Above: *Chair of the January Nationals Meeting, Attaché Ashton Ford, leads guest speaker Jessica Learmond-Criqui, Josephine Learmond-Criqui, and one hundred-plus nationals in a minute's silence in honour of the late Lawrence Noel.*

Above: *The late Lawrence Noel (left) with Sir Ellis Clarke (centre) and other awardees at the Gala Awards Ceremony, London, October, 2008.*

Day after the storm: *View from the High Commission on Tuesday 3rd February, 2009, the day after London's worst snow storm in over twenty years.*



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